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Letter dated 1 November 2018 from the Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The People's Republic of China, in its capacity as President of the Security Council during the month of November 2018, will hold an open debate on the theme "Maintenance of international peace and security: strengthening multilateralism and the role of the United Nations".

I have the honour to inform you that the meeting will be held on Friday, 9 November, starting at 10 a.m., in the Security Council Chamber. To provide more information and guide a fruitful discussion, we have prepared the attached concept note (see annex).

I would be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council, in connection with the item entitled "Maintenance of international peace and security".

(*Signed*) **Ma** Zhaoxu
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of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations

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Annex to the letter dated 1 November 2018 from the Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Chinese and English]

Security Council Open Debate on "Maintenance of International Peace and Security: Strengthening Multilateralism and the Role of the United Nations"

(Security Council Chamber — 9 November 2018, at 10 a.m.)

Concept Paper

I. Introduction

1. As the rotating President of the Security Council in November, China will hold an open debate on the theme of "Maintenance of International Peace and Security: Strengthening Multilateralism and the Role of the United Nations." The debate will be aimed at addressing emerging issues and new challenges around international peace and security in the current environment, reaffirming commitment by Member States to the Charter of the United Nations, exploring ways to enhance multilateralism and the role of the United Nations, and enabling the Security Council to effectively perform its functions as a collective security mechanism and better maintain international peace and security.

II. Background

2. The United Nations embodies mankind's aspirations for peace, development, harmony, prosperity and a better future. For more than seventy years, the collective security mechanism centred around the United Nations has served as the cornerstone for peace and stability in the international community and for the development and progress of human society; the purposes and principles of the Charter have constituted the basic norms in international relations; and the concept and practice of multilateralism have brought tangible benefits to all.

3. Meanwhile, the world has experienced many changes that are posing new challenges. Increasingly, it must grapple with such matters as the intertwining of traditional and non-traditional security issues, protracted regional conflicts, terrorism and transnational organized crime. The road towards world peace and stability remains long and arduous.

4. The international community is now a global village, interconnected and interdependent. Countries are bound together in the fields of political affairs, security, economic development, trade, social activities and ideas. The words and deeds of one country and the interaction between different countries often impact other parties and might even entail global ramifications. Economic globalization calls for openness, tolerance, inclusiveness and win-win cooperation. Peace and stability in individual countries depend on the attainment of common security.

5. Since the early 1990s, the need to strengthen multilateralism and the role of the United Nations has become the consensus among countries. On January 31, 1992, the Security Council held its first summit-level meeting, at which the Member States reiterated their commitment to multilateralism and to the collective security mechanism established under the Charter. On September 14, 2005, on the occasion of

the 60th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, the Security Council held another summit-level meeting, whose participants were broadly of the view that in such areas as combating terrorism, the international community needed to consolidate multilateral mechanisms to ensure an effective response by the United Nations to global challenges.

6. In February 2015, the Council held a ministerial-level open debate, reiterating a firm commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter and the collective security mechanism established under the Charter and emphasizing the need to build a new type of international relations based on mutual benefit. During an open debate of the Council in May 2018, the Member States held an in-depth discussion on how to take collective action to deal with the complex global environment and maintain international peace and security through compliance with international law. The Member States reaffirmed their desire to safeguard the multilateral system and the rules-based international order.

7. In his 2018 annual report, Secretary-General António Guterres stated that "working together multilaterally is not optional; it is the only answer." No country can achieve its own security by fighting alone, and no country can gain stability out of the turmoil of other countries.

8. The theme of the general debate of the 73rd session of the General Assembly is "Making the United Nations relevant to all people: global leadership and shared responsibilities for peaceful, equitable and sustainable societies." During the general debate, María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés, President of the General Assembly, stressed that multilateralism is the only possible answer to the global problems we face. Interdependence among countries requires that we maintain global dialogue and collective action. It calls for all parties to reaffirm their commitment to multilateralism. Indeed, a vast majority of the speakers called for supporting multilateralism, for strengthening the role of the United Nations, and for sustaining the rules-based international order.

III. Focus of Discussion

How to better uphold multilateralism?

9. Multilateralism emphasizes a consultative spirit in interactions with others, adherence to rules and order, and solving problems collectively, thereby providing the stability and predictability necessary for the international community to move forward. The most basic principle of multilateralism is that when dealing with matters in the international arena, it is necessary to uphold fairness, justice and the participation of all countries in discussing actions to be taken; actions must be taken in accordance with rules agreed upon by all; and the interests and concerns of all countries must be taken into account.

10. Currently the international environment is becoming increasingly unstable and uncertain. Multilateralism has arrived at a critical crossroads. Countries need to engage in in-depth discussions on how to adapt to the trend of the times, how to foster unity and cooperation, and how to enhance mutual understanding and trust. These questions must be addressed collectively.

How to further promote the role of the United Nations?

11. The United Nations is a critical pillar of multilateralism. During the past seventy years or so, the international system, with the United Nations as its core, and the international order, based on rules, have proved crucial for maintaining the stability of the post-war world order.

12. In the new environment, we must ask how we can better uphold and carry forward the purposes and principles of the Charter; how to we can deepen coordination and cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations; and how we can better support the central role of the United Nations in international affairs and make the Organization relevant to all people.

How to effectively address global challenges?

13. Global challenges such as terrorism and risks to cybersecurity loom ever larger, requiring countries to formulate a coherent strategy and take collective action. Secretary-General Guterres has stated that "in the face of massive, existential threats to people and planet, there is no way forward but collective, common-sense action for the common good."

14. The Security Council, being at the core of the international collective security mechanism, has the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. There are questions that we must answer: How can we more effectively safeguard this collective mechanism? How can we promote peaceful resolution of disputes through dialogue, consultation and the path of political settlement? How can we enhance the role of United Nations peacekeeping operations in ensuring lasting peace and sustainable development?

IV. Debate Format

15. The meeting will be held in the form of an open debate. United Nations Secretary-General Mr. António Guterres will give a briefing at the beginning of the open debate. The meeting will not adopt an outcome document.